

# Communication Matters

Volume 5, Issue 1 • October 2004

Past issues of Communication Matters are posted on the **E-Learn Deaf & Hard of Hearing Resource Center**. Information or news related to Deaf or Hard of Hearing services may be forwarded to Julie Eckhardt at [jewel@chartermi.net](mailto:jewel@chartermi.net). Views expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily the views of Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth-Rehabilitation Services.

Communication Matters is available on the web at: [www.michigan.gov/mrs](http://www.michigan.gov/mrs).

## Communication Accommodations at Work

### A CD-ROM resource

Workers with hearing loss need to know how to determine their own accommodations for effective work communication. They must also know how to appropriately discuss those needs with their supervisor and co-workers. People seeking employment will feel more confident addressing work communication needs if provided training and basic guidelines.



A resource has been developed by the Rehabilitation Research & Training Center for Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. One section of the CD ROM allows the user to identify their own specific communication challenges and possible solutions. Another topic addresses effective ways to request accommodations, both informally and formally. Also included are Communication Tips for Co-Workers, information about assistive hearing technology, and more.

AcCOMModate uses video lecture with captions. It is probably most appropriate for consumers who are hard of hearing or late deafened. The content is excellent for every person with hearing loss who is concerned about the best way to determine and request accommodations. It will also provide useful background for rehabilitation counselors. The material is presented in an entertaining and interactive format, that is also appropriate for transition age students.

**AcCOMModate is only \$25 and is available here:**

[www.uark.edu:80/depts/rehabres/AccommodateFiles/Accommodate%20AD%20A.html](http://www.uark.edu:80/depts/rehabres/AccommodateFiles/Accommodate%20AD%20A.html)

## Assessing Hearing Loss Impacts at Work

A workplace assessment tool for individuals who are hard of hearing has been developed by Ann Liming, Hard of Hearing Specialist at the Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Julie Eckhardt has worked with Ann to develop a version of the tool for use by MRS. The purpose of the tool is to identify barriers to communication resulting from hearing loss. By more completely identifying workplace communication barriers, counselors will be able to provide complete and appropriate services. The tool may be used with people who are seeking employment or currently employed.

Ann Liming and Julie Eckhardt will be introducing the assessment tool at the Michigan Rehabilitation Conference. Their presentation will explain the assessment tool and ways it has been successfully used with workers who have a hearing loss. The title of this presentation is: ***Beyond Hearing Aids: Assessing Workplace Impacts with People who are Hard of Hearing.***

We are currently “field-testing” the assessment tool and will incorporate feedback. If you would like to see the assessment tool, or try it out with a client (or yourself) who has a hearing loss, please contact Julie Eckhardt at 231/922-2943 or [jewel@chartermi.net](mailto:jewel@chartermi.net).

## NTID Online Writing Courses

### Written Communication in the Workplace



Basic Correspondence



Basic Report Writing

Registration Deadline: October 22, 2004

Tuition: \$227/ credit hour (4 credits)

Call 585-475-6356 V or 585-475-5147 TTY  
[www.ntid.rit.edu/DL/writtencommunication/](http://www.ntid.rit.edu/DL/writtencommunication/)

# Adults with Congenital Rubella Syndrome: Complications in Adulthood

Similar to post-polio syndrome, doctors are finding that adults who were exposed to rubella prenatally are at higher risk for certain disorders as adults. Many of today's deaf adults were exposed to rubella in the last major outbreak 40 years ago.

According to the Helen Keller National Center, "Between 1964 and 1965, there was a worldwide epidemic of rubella, also known as German measles. Pregnant women who contracted rubella in the first trimester of their pregnancy could pass the rubella virus to their developing fetus, causing the child to be born deaf, blind, with cardiac problems, developmental delays and other medical conditions. In the United States alone, approximately 20,000 children were born with two or more of these symptoms, which came to be known as congenital rubella syndrome or CRS."

The following are just some of the patterns being identified by researchers. Counselors should be attentive for additional symptoms in adults whose deafness is due to prenatal rubella.

**Psychosis:** "The rubella-exposed subjects, most of whom were exposed in the first trimester, demonstrated a substantially greater risk for nonaffective psychosis than the subjects who were not exposed to rubella." (Alan S. Brown, M.D., Patricia Cohen, Ph.D., Steven Greenwald, M.A., and Ezra Susser, M.D., Dr.P.H., 1997)

**Glaucoma:** "Thirty percent (30%) of our respondents were reported to have glaucoma. This rate of occurrence is very high, when compared to an incidence of 0.5% in the general population." (Nancy O'Donnell, HKNC, Coordinator of Special Projects, 2003)

**Diabetes:** "Research in programs at the Maryland School for the Deaf (1980) and previous findings from Australia indicated that diabetes mellitus is starting to appear among rubella deaf teenagers at an alarming rate of 15-40%." (Vernon, Grieve, Shaver, 1980)

**Other concerns:** Heart, thyroid, esophageal and other degenerative conditions have been identified among people with CRS.

## More on CRS...

**Helen Keller National Center:**  
[www.hknc.org/Rubella.htm](http://www.hknc.org/Rubella.htm)

**Deaf Today:**  
[www.deaftoday.com/v3/archives/2004/09/rubella\\_syndrom.html](http://www.deaftoday.com/v3/archives/2004/09/rubella_syndrom.html)

**DB Link:**  
[www.tr.wou.edu/dblink/crsfull.htm](http://www.tr.wou.edu/dblink/crsfull.htm)

## Adult Hearing Aids Restored to Medicaid Budget

During this past fiscal year, working age adults were not eligible to obtain hearing aids under Michigan's Medicaid program. The Federal government considers hearing aids for adults one of a group of "optional services." Because of Michigan's budget crisis, this group of optional services was discontinued. Early reports say that Medicaid coverage has been restored for the fiscal year beginning October 1. Some restrictions will apply, related to degree of hearing loss and frequency of replacements, and will be determined in the near future.

The Michigan Coalition for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People, Michigan Association for Deaf, Hearing and Speech Services, Michigan Academy of Audiologists and other advocacy groups have worked hard to inform legislators and the Governor of the importance of these programs.

**Source:** E-Michigan Deaf & Hard of Hearing People  
[www.michdhh.org](http://www.michdhh.org)

## Ears Hear Differently!

The right and left ear may process sound differently, according to a new study at the University of California, Los Angeles. The left ear is more attuned to music, whereas the right responds more to speech. Researchers tested the hearing abilities of some 3,000 newborns with different types of sounds. Their left ears more efficiently amplified music, while their right ears more effectively amplified speech. The study could lead to better approaches for treating hearing loss.

**Source:** "THE WEEK" Health and Science News, October 1, 2004, page 22.